

How Stages Correlates with the South Carolina Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests Alternate Assessment [PACT-Alt]

Stages is relevant for a broad spectrum of South Carolina learners with special needs.

- A.** Learners who are evaluated through alternate assessment benefit from the powerful data-gathering features of Stages.
- B.** Through Stages, learners gain meaningful and effective access to the general curriculum.
- C.** Stages helps the instructional teams to determine the learning and assessment environment most suited toward the learner.

The following sections describe the relevance of Stages to this learner population in greater detail.

Stages and the South Carolina Alternate Assessment Process

OVERVIEW

Stages includes two major software components: (a) informal benchmark software and (b) curriculum software. Stages informal assessment software is instructional in nature, providing activities with constructive feedback and opportunities for the learner to explore and choose. Stages curriculum software is a collection of interactive daily instructional programs appropriate for learners at each Stage.

Stages software enhances the South Carolina's alternate assessment process because:

- A. Stages correlates with the contents of South Carolina Adapted Standards for Alternate Assessment.**
- B. Stages generates primary documentation for the learner's portfolio.**
- C. Stages allows learner to demonstrate functional skills prior to formal assessment.**
- D. Stages assists the learner's IEP and/or instructional teams with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.**

A. Stages correlates with the contents of South Carolina Adapted Standards for Alternate Assessment.

A major IDEA '97 goal is to include all students in statewide assessments and general education curriculum regardless of disabilities. Stages ensures meaningful and effective access to general curriculum areas because Stages activities can be completed using a variety of input devices, such as mouse pointer, touch screen, switches, and keyboard. Stages content aligns with standards in mathematics and reading/English language arts, including applications to functional living situations. Please refer to the next section, "How Stages Correlates with South Carolina's Adapted Standards for Alternate Assessment" for detailed matching between the informal assessment software and specific academic curricula.

B. Stages generates primary documentation for the learner's portfolio.

During Stages software activities, the instructor can print directly from any screen to capture a learner-generated product. At the end of each activity, a report with data about the time spent, choices made, response accuracy or work product, input method, prompt type, and time/date stamp are displayed with the learner's name. The instructional team member may wish to then print that screen or save the information as a text-format electronic file.

Observation guidelines and forms in the Stages kits help the instructional team make the most out of an activity session as the data-gathering features of the software enable the observer to focus on noting the learner's behavior and thinking-out-loud responses. Two adults from the

instructional team can work together: one adult can encourage the learner and the other can note valuable data about behaviors without being noticed by the learner. Alternatively if a video or still camera is available, it may be directed at the learner and the computer monitor to discreetly record interactions and other behaviors while one adult coaches. Over time, the collected data will provide evidence that the instructional team needs to build a complete picture of the learner's skill achievement.

C. Stages allows the learner to demonstrate skills prior to formal assessment.

The feedback in Stages activities is encouraging and rewarding, providing a relaxed setting for exploring topics and demonstrating achievement. During the sessions, the learner will be less conscious of her performance being recorded, making her responses more candid.

D. Stages assists the learner's IEP and/or instructional teams with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.

Stages software is also designed to provide several options for input methods and other settings so that the learner's IEP/instructional team can determine his ideal learning and communication environment. Different devices, auditory feedback, speeds and prompts are among the variables.

SUMMARY

Stages augments the South Carolina alternative assessment cycle. The Stages software is a comprehensive tool to assist the instructional team in collecting valuable evidence for the learner's portfolio, determining assessment strategy, and discovering the learner's abilities and thinking approach.

How Stages Correlates with South Carolina Adapted Standards for Alternate Assessment¹

Mathematics Standards and Expectations

NUMBER AND OPERATIONS

Standard I: Understand numbers, ways of representing numbers, relationships among numbers, and number systems.

- A. Count with understanding and recognize “how many” in sets of objects.
- C. Develop understanding of the relative position and magnitude of whole numbers and of [ordinal and] cardinal numbers and their connections.
- D. Develop a sense of whole numbers and represent and use them in flexible ways, including relating, composing, and decomposing numbers.
- F. Understand and represent commonly used fractions, such as $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, and $\frac{1}{2}$.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Number ID, Counting

Stage Five: *Math:* Fractions

Problem Solving: Tic-Tac-Toe

Stage Six: *Explore and Assess:* Counting Money

Stage Four provides the learner with the chance to identify numbers, count out familiar objects on the screen and indicate the number on an accessible number line. Stage Five *Tic-Tac-Toe* is an accessible version of the classic turn-taking game. Common objects are also part of the *Fractions* activity.

Standard II: Understand meanings of operations and how they relate to one another.

- A. Understand various meanings of addition and subtraction of whole numbers and the relationship between the two operations.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: *Math:* Word Problems (+, -)

On-screen manipulatives in *Word Problems* aid the learner. For example, pictures of dollar bills help the learner count out the additional money needed to make a purchase.

¹ Information found in South Carolina Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests: Alternate Assessment Portfolio Guide. Source: www.myschools.com/offices/assessment/Programs/PACT_Alt/Revised_manual_8-16-01.doc (Accessed February 8, 2002).

Standard III: Compute fluently and make reasonable estimates.

C. Use a variety of methods and tools to compute, including objects, mental computation, estimation, paper and pencil, and calculators.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Math Facts (+, -, x, ÷), Word Problems (+, -, x, ÷)

Stage Six: Assess: Counting Money, Money Equivalents

The learner uses models on the screen to select appropriate items or amounts or count money.

ALGEBRA

Standard I: Understand patterns, relations, and functions.

A. Sort, classify, and order objects by size, number, and other properties.

B. Recognize, describe, and extend patterns such as sequences of sounds and shapes or simple numeric patterns and translate from one representation to another.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: Category Identification: Animals, Clothing, Vehicles

Function Identification: Clothing, Toys, Vehicles

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Estimating, Spatial Relationships, Explore Patterns, Continue/Fill-In Patterns, Create Patterns

Stage Six: Explore and Assess: Getting Dressed, Using Objects

These Stage Three and Stage Six activities give the learner the opportunity to select appropriate items for certain tasks. Stage Four *Estimating* and *Spatial Relationships* activities ask the learner to compare two objects according to their properties. Stage Four *Patterns* activities include sounds, shapes, and colors.

Standard IV: Analyze changes in various contexts.

D. Describe qualitative change, such as a student's growing taller.

E. Describe quantitative change, such as a student's growing two inches in one year.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Explore Compare, Estimating, Spatial Relationships, Explore Patterns, Continue/Fill-In Patterns

Stage Five: Math: Charts and Graphs

The learner explores and identifies size relationships in Stage Four. Qualitative changes are introduced in the *Patterns* activities. The learner makes quantitative comparisons in *Charts and Graphs*.

GEOMETRY

Standard I: Analyze characteristics and properties of two- and three-dimensional geometric shapes and develop mathematical arguments about geometric relationships.

A. Recognize, name, build, draw, compare, and sort two- [and three]-dimensional shapes.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Shapes:* Explore and Assess

Stage Five: *Problem Solving:* Mystery Shape

Stage Six: *Explore:* Signs Orientation

Assess: Recognizing Signs

The learner compares and identifies shapes in Stages Four and Five. In Stage Six, the learner recognizes and responds to community signs by shape and symbol and their function in daily living.

Standard II: Specify locations and describe spatial relationships using coordinate geometry and other representational systems.

A. Describe, name, and interpret relative positions in space and apply ideas about relative position.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Explore Compare, Spatial Relationships

Standard IV: Use visualization, spatial reasoning, and geometric modeling to solve problems.

D. Recognize geometric shapes and structures in the environment and specify their location.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Explore Compare, Spatial Relationships

Shapes: Explore and Assess

The learner identifies shapes in scenes and learns about relative locations in Stage Four.

MEASUREMENT

Standard I: Understand measurable attributes of objects and the units, systems, and processes of measurement.

- A.** Recognize the attributes of length, volume, [weight,] area, and time.
- B.** Compare and order objects according to these attributes.
- F.** Understand how to measure using nonstandard and standard units.
- G.** Select an appropriate unit and tool for the attribute being measured.

Standard II: Apply appropriate techniques,, tools and formulas to determine measurements.

- C.** Use tools to measure.
- D.** Develop common referents for measure to make comparisons and estimates.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: *Math:* Geometry

Problem Solving: Shape Mystery

Stage Six: *Explore:* Telling Time, Using Money

Assess: Telling Time, Money Names, Money Equivalents, Counting Money

Stage Five *Geometry* provides the learner with questions about dimensions in standard and nonstandard units. The learner compares the attributes of different shapes in *Shape Mystery*. In Stage Six, the learner works with clocks in digital and analog format.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PROBABILITY

Standard I: Formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer them.

- A.** Pose questions and gather data about themselves and their surroundings.
- B.** Sort and classify objects according to their attributes and organize data about the objects.
- C.** Represent data using concrete objects, pictures, and graphs.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: *Math:* Charts and Graphs

Reading/English Language Arts Strands and Content Standards

STRAND: USING LANGUAGE TO LEARN

Content Standards

1. Students use language processes and strategies for continuous learning.
2. Students use personal experience, the printed word, and information gained from observation as a basis for constructing meaning.
3. Students use language to clarify thought.
4. Students synthesize information from a variety of sources.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

All Stages: Activities provide opportunities to attend to directions of different levels of complexity in spoken and text formats.

Stage Six: *Stories:* Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

Explore: Signs Orientation, Clothing Orientation, Object Orientation

Assess: Looking at Signs, Getting Dressed, Using Objects

In Stage Six *Stories*, the learner turns pages of short passages and attends to illustrations, photographs, or text with the aid of an input device. The learner practices and chooses the appropriate object, clothing item, or community signs in Stage Six *Explore* and *Assess* activities.

STRAND: USING THE CONVENTIONS AND FORMS OF LANGUAGE

Content Standards

7. Students use language in a variety of forms.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: *Making Sentences:* Spelling and Grammar, Writing Sentences

Making Stories

The text-to-speech feature of *Making Stories* gives the non-verbal learner an opportunity to express feelings and responses. The on-screen keyboard option in Stage Seven activities provides an accessible word processing tool to demonstrate spelling and other writing skills on a daily basis. Customized activities can be created by the instructor in the *Spelling and Grammar* activities.

STRAND: USING LANGUAGE TO COMMUNICATE

Content Standards

8. Students use language processes and strategies effectively to communicate.
9. Students use language for a variety of real purposes and audiences.
10. Students communicate effectively in various ways.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

All Stages: Observation forms specific to each Stage guide the instructor to record notes on the learner's nonverbal communication.

All Stages: Accessible items in the activities provide the learner with the opportunity to make choices, whether to explore items or to indicate responses to multiple-choice questions.

Stage Seven: *Making Stories*